News Release
Communiqué

Ontario

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée

For Immediate Release
November 26, 2007
2007/nr-202

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF FRENCH LANGUAGE HEALTH SERVICES

New Advisory Council Established To Provide Advice To The Minister

OTTAWA – The McGuinty government is creating a new advisory council on health care issues facing the province's Francophone community, Deputy Premier and Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman and Madeleine Meilleur, Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs, announced today.

"Our pledge to improve health services by providing more family care and lower emergency room wait times must include French language services." said Smitherman. "Through this advisory council we are reaching out to Francophone communities because we believe health care in Ontario should be guided by a commitment to equity and respect for diversity."

"We want to ensure that Francophones have access to health services in French within their own communities," said Madeleine Meilleur, Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs. "That's why we are establishing a special advisory council that will focus all of its energy on ensuring that the health care needs of Francophone Ontarians are met."

The French Language Health Services Advisory Council is mandated under the *Local Health System Integration Act* (LHSIA). The council will provide advice to the Minister about health and service delivery issues related to Francophone communities, and the ongoing development of policies and strategies that contribute towards helping Franco-Ontarians access, in French, the care they need.

The Council will receive financial and administrative support from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

"I look forward to representing the Francophone community," said M. Jean-Gilles Pelletier, newly named Chair. "The members of the committee come from all regions of Ontario. We will work together to provide informed advice towards the ongoing development of provincial health care policies and strategies."

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities - keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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Media Contacts:
Laurel Ostfield
Minister's Office
416-212-4048

David Jensen
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 416-327-4327, or 1-866-532-3161

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